

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7747

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T AMMAN 2329

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, JO, US, SA, UR

SUBJECT: JORDAN AIR DEFENSE

REF: STATE 104316

1. KING CALLED ME AFTER LUNCH MAY 1. SAID HE HAD JUST RECEIVED LETTER FROM PRINCE FAHD AND WANTED ME TO COME TO PALACE RIGHT AWAY FOR HIM TO READ ME THE CONTENTS. KING HAD SEVERAL UNCOMPLIMENTARY THINGS TO SAY ABOUT THE LETTER OVER TELEPHONE.

2. FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER I WAS AT THE PALACE AND FOUND THE KING SCRIBBLING BUSILY. HE WELCOMED ME AND PROCEEDED TO READ A LETTER TO HIM FROM PRINCE FAHD DATED APRIL 29. I WAS NOT SURPRISED AT CONTENTS AFTER READING REFTEL HERE EARLIER THIS MORNING. FAHD RECOUNTS SAUDI SIDE OF THE ISSUE AND IN EFFECT SAYS JORDAN CAN STILL HAVE THE \$300 MILLION BUT IT MUST BE PAID DIRECTLY TO THE SUPPLYING STATE AND SPREAD OUT OVER TEN YEARS. IF JORDAN BELIEVES U.S. DEAL IS NULL AND VOID, JORDAN IS FREE TO PURCHASE THE SYSTEM FROM ANY EUROPEAN STATE IT WISHES WITH SAUDI ARABIA APPROVING A SUPPLIER AND PAYING THE MONEY DIRECTLY INTO THE HANDS OF THE SUPPLIER.

3. KING IS OF COURSE MOST UNHAPPY. HE REMINDED ME
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OF THE FACT THAT SHAH TOLD HIM A MONTH AGO U.S. WOULD

MAKE SURE SUADIS NEVER PROVIDED FUNDS TO KING FOR A SOVIET WEAPON SYSTEM.

4. I ASKED KING WHAT HIS NEXT STEP WOULD BE. HE SAID HE GUESSED HE WOULD HAVE TO SEND A REPLY TO THE SAUDIS BECAUSE TIME IS SO SHORT. I SAID TO HIM WITH ALL RESPECT IT WAS MY PERSONAL IMPRESSION THAT COMMUNICATIONS ON BOTH SIDES HAD ALREADY DONE ENOUGH TO DISRUPT ANY PROGRESS WE MIGHT HAVE MADE IN BRINGING ABOUT A BETTER ARRANGEMENT. I ASKED HIM FOR TIME TO REPORT THIS MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENT TO WASHINGTON AND TO SEEK WASHINGTON'S ADVICE AND COUNSEL BEFORE HE SENT OFF ANOTHER REPLY TO SAUDI ARABIA. I TOLD HIM TOO IT WOULD BE MY PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION TO WASHINGTON THAT HE BE ASKED NOT TO SEND A FURTHER REPLY UNTIL WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THIS LETTER IS THE FINAL SAUDI POSITION IN RESPONSE TO THE CONVERSATIONS WE HAVE BEEN HAVING WITH THEM OR MERELY LATEST SALVO IN THE WAR OF WORDS WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE INTERRUPTED AND DISTURBED OUR EFFORTS TO MAKE PROGRESS ON THE AIR DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS. HE SORT OF AGREED BY TELLING ME THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY TAKE HIM UNTIL TOMORROW NIGHT TO CALM DOWN AND FRAME A DECENT REPLY.

5. HE GAVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE EXTENSIVE NOTES ON THE LETTER AS HE READ IT TO ME. THESE FOLLOW IN SEPTEL. HE ALSO PROMISED US PHOTOCOPY OF ARABIC ORIGINAL WHICH WILL REQUIRE A SIGNIFICANTLY LONGER TIME FOR US TO TRANSLATE AND FORWARD TO YOU.
PICKERING

SECRET

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